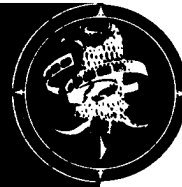


Secret 32

NATIONAL PHOTOGRAPHIC INTERPRETATION CENTER



25X1

Imagery analysis report

Airfield Construction in the Western Military District Egypt, 1976 — 1980 (S)

Secret

WNINTEL

Z-20120/80
IAR-0140/80
NOVEMBER 1980
Copy 170

Page Denied

SECRET

25X1

AIRFIELD CONSTRUCTION IN THE WESTERN MILITARY DISTRICT EGYPT, 1976 – 1980 (S)

INTRODUCTION

1. (S/D) This report provides information on new airfield construction and improvements to existing airfields in the Egyptian Western Military District (WMD) since 1976, when a build-up of Egyptian forces began opposite the Egyptian/Libyan border. The report includes a map giving locations of the airfields, photographs of four airfields, and a table.

DISCUSSION

2. (S/D) Prior to the summer of 1976, the only major operational airfield in the WMD was at Mersa Matruh. Siwa Oasis Airfield North, with runways too short for jet aircraft operation, and As Sallum Heliport were the only other operational air facilities in the WMD at that time. Three airfields (the first two abandoned)—Siwah Oasis Airfield South, Siwah Oasis Airfield, and Al Maktilah Airfield—all had unusable short sand strips.

3. (S/D) Since the summer of 1976 new jet-capable airfields have been constructed at Sidi Barrani and at As Sallum, and a third is in the final stages of construction at Habata. The fourth jet-capable airfield in the WMD, at Mersa Matruh, has undergone extensive upgrading since September 1976 (Figure 1). Construction began at Sidi Barrani Airfield in the summer of 1976, at Habata Airfield in the spring of 1979, and at As Sallum Airfield in the late summer of 1979. While this report was in production a new military airfield was identified on imagery of [] 21 nautical miles (nm) north of Siwah and 40 nm east of the Egyptian/Libyan border.¹ Uthman Airfield [] was in the mid-stage of construction and consists of a 3,000-by 40-meter runway, a parallel runway/taxiway, a 300- by 70-meter parking apron, four crossover links, and two end links. In addition, 12 hangarettes and five probable vehicle shelters were under construction, and there was an area observed which may be intended for the construction of four additional hangarettes.

25X1
25X1
25X1

Sidi Barrani Airfield

4. (S/D) Sidi Barrani Airfield (Figure 2) was first observed under construction on [] when grading in preparation for runway and loop taxiway construction was observed. By early 1977, the airfield had been completed. It consisted of a single, 3,000- meter plus hard-surface runway; four loop taxiways (with four aircraft hardstands each); and a perimeter road. Construction of a parallel runway/taxiway east of the original runway and revetting of the hardstands was started in the spring of 1977 and completed by late summer of that year.

25X1
25X1

5. (S/D) In early 1979, hangarette construction was observed at this airfield. By June 1980, twenty-four hangarettes were in their final construction stage, as were four new loop taxiways (with four to six revetted hardstands each) and a parking apron.

6. (S/D) On [] the first aircraft, 15 FISHBED, were observed at Sidi Barrani Airfield. By late October, all but one FISHBED had been removed. Sometime after mid-January 1978 the final FISHBED was removed and no aircraft were observed for more than a year. A

25X1

(Continued p. 4)

SECRET

Table 1.
Airfields in the Western Military District of Egypt

This table in its entirety is classified (SECRET/WNINTEL)

Name	Runway(s) L x W	Taxiways	Parking	Hardstands	Hangarages
BE No/Coordinates	Orientation (deg)				
Sidi Barrani Airfield [redacted] 31-28-17N 025-32-37E	3,048 X 49 160/340 true	1 parallel runway/ taxiway; 5 crossover, 2 end- connecting links; 4 loops (ucon)	1 under construction	29 small (21 revetted)	24 drive-thru (in various stages of construction)
Habata Airfield [redacted] 31-05-29N 025-26-56E	3,016 NNW/SSE	1 parallel taxiway 5 crossover, 2 end- connecting links		9 small (under construction)	8 drive-thru (in various stages of construction)
As Sallum Airfield [redacted] 31-27-39N 025-17-11E	2,000 NW/SE	1 loop			
Mersa Matruh Airfield [redacted]	3,025 X 46 150/330 true 3,023 X 46 060/240 true	1 parallel taxiway; 4 crossover, 2 end- connecting links 1 parallel taxiway; 4 crossover, 2 end- connecting links	One large (half asphalt and half concrete)	35 small (21 revetted); 7 large revetted	8 drive-in (preexisting); 8 newly constructed drive-thru; 11 drive-thru (under construction)
Siwa Oasis Airfield North [redacted] 29-20-20N 025-30-40E	1,634 X 45 NNW/SSE 1497 X 48 NNW/SSE (graded earth)	1 taxiway to parking apron	1 graded earth parking apron 1 graded earth parking apron		
Al Maktilah Airfield [redacted] 31-31-48N 026-11-25E	1,231 X 45 (sand)	1 loop taxiway			
As Sallum Helinort [redacted] 31-34-20N 025-07-45E	251 X 50	153 X 107 loop			

25X1

25X1

25X1

25X1

25X1

25X1

25X1

SECRET

SECRET

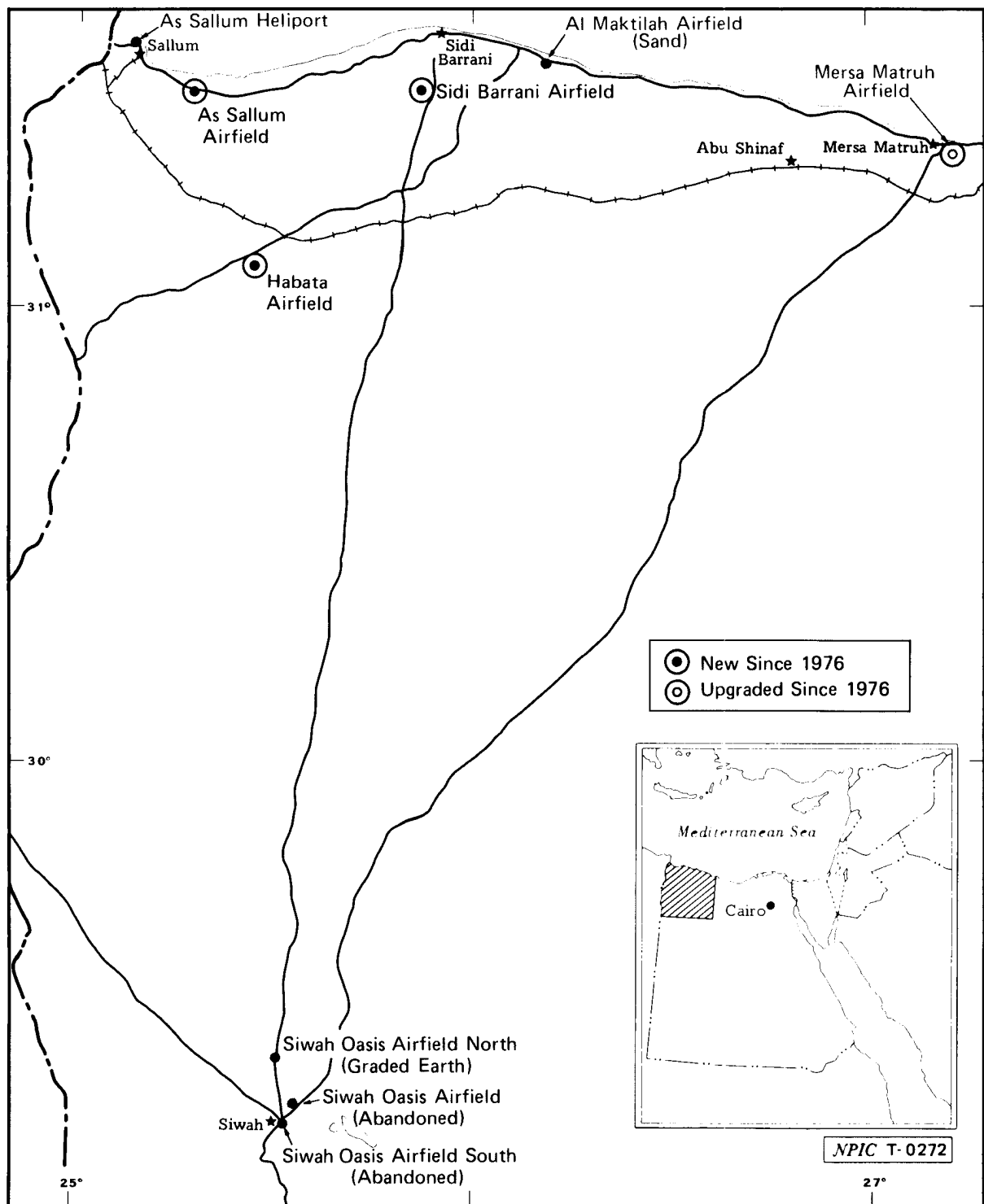


FIGURE 1. EGYPTIAN WESTERN MILITARY DISTRICT AIRFIELDS

SECRET

SECRET

FISHBED squadron was again deployed to Sidi Barrani and was observed on [REDACTED] Since that time, five to 13 FISHBED and an occasional HIP-C have been seen at the airfield.

25X1

Habata Airfield

7. (S/D) Construction for the new Habata Airfield (Figure 3) was first detected in May and June 1979 when a construction camp and four hangarettes in the early stages of construction were observed. Initial work on the 3,000-meter plus hard-surface main runway was observed in July, and by September surfacing of the main runway and initial construction of a parallel runway/taxiway had begun. Construction of the remaining airfield facilities, including eight additional hangarettes was started between October and December 1979. By May 1980, the runways and taxiways had been completed and work on the hangarettes was in the mid-to-final stages of completion. As of that time, no aircraft had been observed at Habata.

As Sallum Airfield

8. (S/D) Initial runway grading at the new As Sallum Airfield (Figure 4) was first observed on imagery of early September 1979. By [REDACTED] the airfield had been completed and consisted of a 2,000-meter, hard-surface runway and a loop taxiway. No aircraft had been observed at As Sallum as of that time.

25X1

Mersa Matruh Airfield

9. (S/D) Upgrading of the facilities at Mersa Matruh Airfield (Figure 5) has been underway since September 1976. This upgrading initially consisted of the construction of 24 hardstands in four groups of six along the taxiways leading to the aircraft dispersal area. In the fall of 1977 construction of new hangarettes began, and since then 19 hangarettes have either been completed or are currently under construction. When all construction has been completed, four new hangarettes will have been added at each end of both runways and an additional three along the north side of the northeast/southwest runway. Two new hardstands also have been added to the southwest end of the northwest/southeast runway.

10. (S/D) Prior to 1976, Mersa Matruh Airfield was used as a jet training base supporting MAYA trainers and transport aircraft. Since 1976 the airfield has supported FISHBED, FITTER, MIRAGE, HIP-C, and transport aircraft.

Activity at Other Western Military District Airfields

11. (S/D) At Siwah Oasis Airfield North the main runway was resurfaced during August and September 1979. Since July 1979 two HIP-C have been observed there regularly. Prior to that time only an occasional transport aircraft was observed at this airfield.

12. (S/D) At Al Maktilah Airfield, support equipment including fuel and water trucks and fuel cells has been present since the summer of 1977, but no aircraft activity or runway improvements have been observed and the airfield remains unserviceable.

13. (S/D) At As Sallum Heliport, no significant activity or improvements to existing facilities have been observed during the period from 1976 to the spring of 1980.

Page Denied

Next 3 Page(s) In Document Denied

SECRET

REFERENCES

IMAGERY

(S/D) Selected imagery from May 1976 through September 1980 was used in the preparation of this report.

DOCUMENT

1. NPIC. [] IAR-A262/80, *New Airfield Under Construction, Egypt (S)*, Oct 80 (TOP SECRET CODEWORDS/[])

25X1
25X1

*Extracted material is SECRET/WNINTEL.

(S) Comments and queries regarding this report are welcome. They may be directed to []
USN, Third World Forces Division, Imagery Exploitation Group, []

25X1
25X1

Secret

Secret